



Global Citizenship Now

GTI Roundtable

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The future necessitates greater global governance than ever before. Robert Paehlke explains why an ethos of global citizenship and the democratization of international relations are essential to building public support. Our panelists discuss how to foster the spread of a global political identity.

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Global Citizenship: Plausible Fears and Necessary Dreams

Robert Paehlke

Abstract: Some see global governance as necessary to protect human rights, mitigate climate disruption, reduce war, and counter rising inequality. Others fear global governance and even assume that all collective global actions, as well as global institutions like the United Nations, threaten both sovereignty and democracy. Within such contested territory, political leaders remain wary of strong global initiatives on environmental and social policy concerns—while still, on the other hand, favoring neoliberal free trade initiatives. Yet many trade treaties are in fact a form of global governance, one that undermines democracy at all levels by privileging the economic dimension of policy while excluding all others. Global citizenship and the democratization of international relations can counter public fears regarding a wide range of global policy initiatives. Such enlargement of the idea of citizenship has become an emergent possibility in the current epoch and, if expressed through a coherent global movement, can become a popular force for a Great Transition.

Global Governance on Trial

UN-funded health workers providing vaccinations in Pakistan were murdered by extremists. Without the violence, but also in the grip of anti-UN paranoia, some US conservatives have denounced, of all things, bicycle paths, alleging that Agenda 21, the UN's 1992 road map for sustainable development, would force Americans out of their cars and into big cities; others have asserted that the UN intends to take people's guns; and Congressman Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA) has called global warming a fraud perpetrated to create a global government "to control all our lives." Prior to becoming Canada's Prime Minister, Stephen Harper argued that the real intent of the Kyoto Accord was global economic redistribution. Such claims are somehow not universally seen as madness.

The question is not whether there will be global governance, but whether it will be democratic and integrative.

The idea of global governance is alien to many. Political wariness clouds how we think about the urgent need for collective action on global challenges. Despite temptations to do so, those who appreciate humanity's multidimensional shared fate should not just ignore this concern. Our political discourse must acknowledge the legitimate anxieties that many have about the prospect of global governance as well as the frequently voiced parallel view that citizen-based global cooperation is essentially silly, an impossible dream of foolish do-gooders. Many doubt that citizens can influence decisions on a global level because they doubt that they can even do so on a local level. We need to respond to cynicism and hopelessness by asserting, based on analysis of historical conditions and emerging possibilities, that there is nothing naïve about believing that citizens, governments, and human institutions can prevent ever-rising inequality and the overheating of the planet.

Those who present global governance as implausible ignore the everyday reality of global economic integration. A fragmented form of global governance already exists, a governance system rooted in the policies implicitly embedded within today's adjudicated trade agreements. This system of governance, in which investment capital is highly mobile and labor much less so, risks placing nations that protect and strengthen social policies, encourage labor unions, or establish environmental rules at a competitive disadvantage.¹ Economic integration in the absence of an overarching and democratically adjudicated framework for establishing economic, social, and environmental rules denies equitable participation in global decisions and systematically undermines local and national democracy. The question is not whether there will be global governance, but whether it will be democratic and integrative.

Today's global trade agreements impact a far broader range of public policies than just trade and occur with virtually no public input or scrutiny. Nobel Prize winning economist Joseph Stiglitz has criticized the anti-democratic nature of such negotiations, noting that "[c]orporations are attempting to achieve by stealth—through secretly negotiated trade agreements—what they could not attain in an open political process."² The Trans-Pacific Partnership, now under deliberation,

Many now see themselves as global citizens.

provides such an example. This closed negotiation process includes government officials, hundreds of corporate representatives, and a small number of labor leaders, but no representatives of other civil society organizations, such as those concerned with the environment, human rights, or social policy.

Global Citizenship Emerging?

Despite wariness of global governance, and lack of awareness that such governance already exists, many now see themselves as global citizens. A multi-nation poll conducted in 2005 found that “for the first time in history, one citizen in five across the world strongly identifies with being a citizen of the world ahead of being a citizen of a home country.”³ Those who fear global governance may find this alarming, but they are clinging to a fading past.

The same poll found that a majority of university-educated citizens saw a need for more comprehensive and better enforced global rules. It also found that leaders of non-governmental organizations, when asked to identify their ideal form of global governance for 2020, were as likely to choose “the emergence of directly-elected world government” as “a reformed and strengthened United Nations.” The extent to which this is a negative judgment about the prospects for UN reform is unclear, but it does suggest that many are open to global political change beyond what most national governments would countenance.⁴

An active global citizens movement (GCM) could, however, grow to influence global outcomes without a global government or even a formal global decision-making process. Indeed, a GCM might not opt to create a global government in the future, even if it had the capacity to do so, if it is able to achieve effective policies and initiatives on key global issues in other ways. Such a strategy for resolving global challenges would require dense cross-national networks and persistent effort.

Only a GCM can provide sustained locale-by-locale support for action on global concerns in the face of certain and ubiquitous political resistance. Indeed, such concerns would not persist if many national and local jurisdictions had not ignored or stymied solutions. A global stage dominated by economic interests and national leaders alone, operating largely behind closed doors, has systematically avoided confronting these challenges. On the world stage, the audience cannot even see the play, let alone join the cast.

In this context, the world has drifted into a perilous condition where problems like climate change and rapidly rising inequality have become urgent, demanding solutions long before global government could emerge. Global, citizen-based political action must precede whatever new institutional arrangements might emerge in the long run. Strengthening organizational capacity and public awareness can, however, mute these crises, and coherent and comprehensive governance can arise out of that process or develop later.

Low political efficacy at a global scale systematically undermines political efficacy within nations.

Building a GCM equal to this challenge is itself a massively complex task, requiring vast reserves of optimism and energy from millions of citizens. Fortunately, complex movements can emerge one issue at a time and spread sporadically and spontaneously. Vibrant global environmental and human rights movements, as well as other efforts addressing key aspects of global citizenship, already exist. Taken together, Amnesty International, Doctors without Borders, Oxfam, and the thousands of citizen-based development, human rights, social justice, environmental, and other civil society organizations could achieve synergies within a multi-issue global citizens movement. Still missing, though, is a wider appreciation of the interrelatedness of the issues on which these groups work as well as a greater sense among their participants that they are engaged in a common effort.

An overarching movement plan is not necessary, nor is an institutional structure or central administration. Movements can be amorphous and grow organically, generally including and spawning diverse organizations, each with continuously evolving perspectives. Individual citizens can, however, identify with and feel a part of a movement as a whole, share its broad goals, and actively participate in—or simply support—its initiatives. The American civil rights movement and the environmental movements in many nations have taken this pluralistic yet unified form. Broad-based movements do not have an address and phone number or a single leadership group. There will not likely be a single central website for the global citizens movement. All of these things make a GCM more decentralized, more unplanned, more possible, and less threatening.

Political Efficacy and Social Change

The social science concept of political efficacy can further illuminate the prospects for such a movement. Political efficacy is self-confidence regarding political activity, the belief that citizens can influence political and policy outcomes. Without widespread political efficacy, democracy loses legitimacy and cannot live up to its potential. Since robust political activism depends on such efficacy, the currently low level of political efficacy with respect to global issues and decisions reveals the challenge inherent in initiating and establishing a global citizens movement.

Moreover, low political efficacy at a global scale systematically undermines political efficacy *within* nations. In particular, inadequate multilateral agreements weaken national capacity to set strong social and environmental policy. Political leaders and economic elites evade responsibility by implying that they are powerless in the face of “global competition” to prevent the erosion of incomes, improve social programs, or strengthen regulation. If citizens believe that governments are powerless to establish policies that affect their everyday lives, they will see little point in participating in the political process.

Global economic integration does not inevitably undermine democracy, but it does

New media make global conversations possible and facilitate the creation and functioning of transboundary organizations of citizens.

when it proceeds without, in the words of former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali, the “democratization of international relations.” Indeed, long-standing inaction on transnational policy challenges reflects a willful erosion of public influence regarding those challenges at all levels. Citizens feel that action is impossible when, in fact, elites have consciously excluded social, environmental, and other urgent matters from existing trade agreements, and largely failed to take effective actions outside of those agreements. The situation is, however, far from hopeless.

American political sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset in his work *Political Man* assessed the determinants of political efficacy and analyzed why social and economic groups did or did not act politically to change an established order. Groups like cigar rollers were politicized, while other groups of similar station were not, because the cigar rollers sat in a circle at large tables and could readily converse while they worked. In other work settings, workers could not interact and thus were far less likely to be politically engaged. Others were more likely to be politicized if they worked and lived in the same neighborhoods and had ongoing social and family connections. Today, while citizens in many nations are politically discouraged, new media make *global* conversations possible and facilitate the creation and functioning of transboundary organizations of citizens.

Industrial age politicization and political efficacy created political forces, such as unions and political parties, that eventually embedded market decisions within democracies in post-Depression, post-World War II Western nations. Unionization, social and educational policies, and graduated taxation all contributed to the reduction of inequality. In the 1970s, in the US and many other nations, citizen-based environmental movements pressed governments to enact wide-ranging regulations.

However, for more than thirty years now, social inequality has risen continuously within most nations, and perilous global environmental problems have emerged. In China, the top 10% now receive 60% of all income, and most rapidly industrializing countries show similar patterns.⁵ In the thirty-four OECD countries, the richest 10% have a total income nine times higher than the lowest 10%, up from seven times higher twenty-five years ago.⁶ Between 1993 and 2012, growth in real income for the top 1% in the US was 86.1%, while the remaining 99% saw income growth of only 6.6%, most of which went to the remainder of the top 10%. Even in more historically equal nations like Germany and Sweden, there has been slippage in recent years.

Three cautions are worth noting regarding this pattern. First, while inequality is rising globally, median incomes in rapidly industrializing countries like China and Brazil are gaining on those in North America and Europe. Second, not all of the increase in national inequality results from globalized trade and “exported” jobs; much results from technological advances that displace human labor. Attributing these trends to increased trade alone is thus an oversimplification that sidesteps the real challenge of establishing policies that reduce inequality within and between nations while also

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improving opportunities for better work-life balance everywhere. Third, not every nation readily accedes to the adoption of austerity policies that exacerbate inequality. France, for example, attempted to resolve its deficits with higher taxes on the wealthy rather than cuts to public sector employment and support for the poor.⁷

In sum, rising inequality is more a result of public policy than an inevitable result of global economic integration, particularly when such policies are economically inefficient, socially divisive, politically corrosive, and environmentally destructive. Governments face constant pressure to adopt policies that exacerbate inequality as a putative necessity to remain economically competitive. A global citizens movement pushing for coordinated global action could offer the much needed counterpressure to such orthodox political logic.

Efficacy, however, also requires overcoming despair regarding the future, the assumption that nothing can change or that things will inevitably get worse. Democracy grew during the Age of Enlightenment, a time of great optimism regarding the human future. Paul Raskin rightfully argues that pessimism is “not so much wrong as disempowering.”⁸ He shows that sufficient resource capacity exists to create, over time, a world that is both environmentally sustainable and globally egalitarian, but that only “pragmatic hope” can create the citizen energy needed to achieve cultural and political change. Frances Moore Lappé likewise argues that environmental doom-and-gloom is a “thought trap” that can stultify our collective capacity to act.⁹

Establishing political efficacy globally is a spectacularly daunting challenge. Yet without it, how will citizens be able to pressure governments into acting on global challenges or, ultimately, institutionalizing inclusive global decision-making processes? Without it, global governance will remain paralyzed and action on global challenges largely inadequate. The challenge is all too real, but global citizen action is beginning to take hold.

Notable efforts include fair trade initiatives, the efforts of development-oriented civil society organizations, global human rights campaigns, and environmental activism. These broad waves of civic initiative play out in myriad examples. For instance, Electoral Rebellion recognizes that people often have a stake in other countries’ elections. Individual Israelis, through this organization, offer to vote on behalf of individual Palestinians, and Germans have voted on behalf of Spaniards when Germany imposed austerity measures on Spain. Those who offer their vote in these cases might well have voted the same way regardless, but the act of exchange is widely visible and makes a political point regarding transborder citizenship interests. In another arena, No Kero and Solar Sister provide affordable solar lighting to replace kerosene lamps and solar phone rechargers for villages beyond the electric grid.¹⁰ Replacing kerosene reduces black carbon (soot), a potent greenhouse gas, and saves users money, thereby improving their economic situations. A self-conscious global citizens movement could expand and multiply these and hundreds of other small

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initiatives.

Activism in the emerging civic, or social, economy complements such work. In the Global South, budding social entrepreneurs, with the help of governments or private foundations, have created innovative products explicitly designed to improve the environment and expand economic opportunities.¹¹ The United States has seen the rise of entrepreneurial nonprofits with social and environmental missions as well as “benefit corporations,” private firms that prioritize purposes other than just the bottom line.¹² Such enterprises, in effect, expand citizenship into the market realm. Few participants in these efforts are under the illusion that their efforts are panaceas, but these initiatives can launch quickly and build the linkages needed to grow a more comprehensive movement. They create connections, nurture hope, and build efficacy.

Challenging governments, international institutions, and trade policy is also essential, but few are prepared to begin there. In concert with global efforts, concrete and visible successes, however small, are needed to build a movement. Even if those initial efforts are insufficient, wider knowledge of them, and more minds opened to new possibilities, will spur other efforts. Such a movement can take hold organically and rapidly as crises mature and more people appreciate that global governance is where the long arc of human history is taking us—and has been for centuries.

A Very Short History of Citizenship

The history of citizenship suggests that global citizenship is part of a natural (though not inevitable) progression of human history. Over the centuries, citizenship evolved from local to national, following the expansion of production and markets. In the context of our increasingly interdependent economy, a shift toward global citizenship and rulemaking simply continues this evolution. The rights and duties of citizenship, moreover, have also evolved and expanded. Citizenship began with legal rights and duties and expanded to incorporate political rights and duties and then, more recently, social and environmental rights and duties. Appreciating this history makes global citizenship and governance less implausible and less threatening.

Citizenship evolved slowly from communities (city-states and principalities) to nation-states. The central impetus for the shift to national citizenship was the Industrial Revolution, where increased output created a need to expand markets. Multiple autonomous principalities hindered trade with their imposition of varying bridge tolls, road use charges, and duties. Larger governmental entities and uniform rules paved the way for continuous growth in production and trade. Growing literacy and rising wealth unrelated to inherited land led to a more democratic sense of citizenship. The nation-state emerged, and the spread of democracy was not far behind.

The creation of the modern welfare state in the first half of the twentieth century enhanced the scope of citizenship. British sociologist T.H. Marshall called this shift

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social citizenship, to convey that meaning of citizenship had come to encompass minimum standards of economic well-being.¹³ Writing in 1950, he argued that the basic rights of citizenship had evolved over several centuries. In Britain, hard-won civil rights (freedoms of speech, assembly, press, and religion, as well as the right to own property, conclude contracts, and access justice) were expanded to include political rights via the Reform Acts of 1832, the 1860s, and the 1880s, which gradually lowered property requirements for voting. These rights then expanded to include basic social rights.

Marshall saw these three aspects of citizen rights (civil, political, and social) as mutually reinforcing. The right to vote protects civil rights, and civil rights are essential to the effectiveness of voting and the functioning of government. Social and economic minima are likewise essential to both voting and civil rights and had, in his view, become a fundamental aspect of modern citizenship by the early twentieth century.

Social citizenship created a right to a modicum of economic welfare and security, the right to live a life of a civilized being according to the standards of the day. At that point, most citizens in wealthy nations had escaped the eighty-hour week, where children worked in mines and most people lived in relentless squalor. Such dire living and working conditions had rendered civil and political rights all but meaningless. At the time, colonialism and poverty prevented most nations outside the West from achieving these levels of welfare. Decolonization has completed the process of nation-state establishment but has not yet significantly expanded social citizenship.

Today, diminishing social equity in wealthy nations undermines Marshall's social citizenship and the sense of progress that supported the emergence of political efficacy and democratic citizenship. Marshall's buoyant perspective now seems to describe a more optimistic and prosperous time, yet when he wrote, average income per capita was far below what it is today. Few political figures today aspire to do more than slow the rate of decline in social equity. Social citizenship is crumbling, and declining social capital is threatening political citizenship.¹⁴

Taking citizenship global will not automatically reverse this decline, but it could build hope by establishing a sense of civic, political, social, and environmental citizenship worldwide. Citizenship, widely understood in global as well as national and local terms, moves mindsets from a focus on competition to citizenly concern regarding shared obligations. In time, it could also change the broad arc of public policy discourse, ultimately altering policy outcomes in ways that re-embed market forces in ethical habits and socio-political rules on a global scale.

Making Global Governance Attractive...and Achievable

Jean-Jacques Rousseau argued that democracy was only possible in communities of limited size. Fortunately, given the need for global governance, our technical capacity

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to communicate has changed radically in the three centuries since Rousseau. The Internet now enables people to locate each other and mobilize around specific initiatives or broad concerns. Internet use has become part of the rhythm of daily life (there are more than 500 million users in China alone), eroding both borders and distance. Barriers like language, censorship, and the cost of access remain, but increasingly, they too can be overcome.

This makes active global citizenship possible by opening lines of communication that can build trust and allow diverse individuals, organizations, and institutions to act together and to pressure governments and public institutions at all levels. With such new technologies, citizen-driven initiatives can be launched in a coordinated way or begin in a few places and spread spontaneously. This makes active global citizenship possible in ways that Rousseau could not have even imagined.

Our communication and transportation systems have facilitated the creation of an increasingly interdependent global economy, but without fair and effective social and environmental rules, such an economy carries great risks. The increasing concentration of wealth leads to a parallel concentration of political power. At the same time, the preferential treatment of investment income and the stagnation, or even decline, of wages reduce public revenue. The impacts of reckless globalization on the ecosphere pose severe risks. Cynicism regarding government rises when political leaders only consider a narrow range of action. A broad citizens movement can counter this distrust by taking citizen-to-citizen communication and democratic action global.

The first (and perhaps the best) way to lessen wariness about more open and visible global governance is to show that, rather than threatening existing democracy, it is crucial to protecting it from the eroding effects of the decidedly non-democratic global governance now operating. To reinforce this message, a global citizens movement might undertake campaigns to strengthen (“thicken,” in political science terminology) local and national democracy. The movement should be consistently and visibly on the side of expanding and deepening democracy, human rights, and fairness.

In Canada, the movement could support proportional representation or preferential voting, where voters can rank each candidate preferentially, with second and third choice votes counted from candidates finishing furthest behind, giving voters more input into election outcomes. The GCM might call for the prompt restoration of free and fair elections in Egypt or their establishment in Saudi Arabia or China. It might also oppose voter identification laws in the United States, which consciously exclude minority, poor, and student voters in certain states, or challenge election finance rules that allow large and secret campaign contributions. American elections, in particular, affect virtually everyone on the planet and are thus, to some extent, everyone’s business.

The principle of subsidiarity should guide decision-making as well as the internal processes of the movement that advances it.

A second way to support and strengthen local and national democracy, and to reflect Rousseau's wisdom, is to promote a limited global agenda. Given that economic integration has at least partially unraveled the embedding of market forces within democratic governance, and that new threats require worldwide action, a global agenda is unavoidable. Nevertheless, the challenges that require global action (as distinct from initiatives within multiple jurisdictions) are few in number. Moreover, policy architecture can accommodate local designs of policy implementation, as federal experience in multiple nations bears out. The principle of subsidiarity, establishing policies at the most local level possible, should guide decision-making as well as the internal processes of the movement that advances it. If the global governance agenda remains limited while an essential feature of global citizenship remains expanding democracy at all levels, not constraining democracy within nations, there is little sound reason for wariness regarding global governance.

Third, local economic diversity, including initiatives advocated by environmental and development citizen activists, aligns well with this emerging cosmopolitanism. Indeed, stronger local economies are needed to enable and support policy subsidiarity. Renewable energy can be small in scale and is typically more widely distributed than other energy options. Local agriculture and food sovereignty strengthen local economies. Even environmentalist demands for durable and repairable products strengthen local economies through stimulating local repair and resale enterprises. Finally, new media distribute content creation widely, the opposite effect of mass media, and have the potential to strengthen citizen engagement by creating new possibilities for political activism.

These possibilities are especially important in the Global South. Without new local energy options, many nations cannot afford fossil fuel imports. Many poor nations already rely heavily on renewable energy sources, usually hydroelectricity and biomass. They could greatly expand renewable energy production with solar and wind, technologies highly suited to decentralized populations. Feed-in tariffs, for instance, could help to scale up these technologies, simultaneously expanding energy access and reducing greenhouse emissions.¹⁵

In the communications sector of the Global South, sunk costs are limited, for example, in telephone lines. New technologies can bypass those costs, just as the limited presence of refining capacity and coal-fired power plants leaves the way open for renewables. Being behind in conventional technology opens the possibility of leapfrogging into more efficient, localized, and green technologies and production options.

Local food production for local consumption is far more secure, sustainable, and affordable than industrial-scale agriculture. The greatest barrier in the South to food production has been North American and European agricultural subsidies and food aid that forces recipient nations to buy from donor nations, undermining local food

Simultaneous action must replace simultaneous inaction.

production. So-called free trade agreements have had little or no impact on those anti-market practices even while the IMF demands reductions in price subsidies for food in many of the affected countries. Movement-linked organizations should advocate greater food sovereignty and support groups that initiate urban food production in poor nations and poor neighborhoods in wealthy nations.

Fourth, a GCM should advance simultaneity as a form of global governance. Simultaneity recognizes that the competitive disadvantages of acting are lowered significantly if economic competitors take simultaneous action. This puts the focus on pressuring and working with local and national governments regarding global concerns. The pursuit of common global purposes is less threatening than are demands for global rulemaking. Some will, of course, nonetheless claim that “foreign” forces are at work, the “proof” lying in the global nature of the campaign. The appropriate response to such assertions is to ask, “What do you think would happen if we took this initiative here and no one elsewhere did so as well?” That indeed is precisely the discussion that needs to take place issue by issue. The logic of simultaneity can be widely understood. Simultaneous action must replace simultaneous inaction.

Fifth, and finally, to achieve broad appeal, a GCM must remain reasonably open regarding classic left-right political perspectives. Citizens everywhere understand that global decisions are now necessary, and a global movement facing up to the urgency of today’s challenges needs to welcome diverse approaches and solutions. The time has passed for anything hinting of reincarnation of the socialist internationals of a bygone era.

We do not, of course, need to hesitate to criticize excessive concentrations of wealth or inadequate regulation. Such things are at the heart of the problems the world faces. However, we need to be mindful that the solution is not just restraining the market, but also opening up more opportunities for real entrepreneurship, especially more start-ups and small-scale or community-based initiatives. Expanded local food and energy production, combined with public incentives such as feed-in-tariffs, is already altering market behavior.

Locally grown organic food, once only in isolated outlets, is now widely available. In Germany citizen, cooperative, municipal, and farmer-owned renewable electricity generation exceeds the output from renewable sources of large utilities, and electricity from those sources and will soon exceed production from fossil-based sources. Such local and participatory control leads to less NIMBY resistance to wind energy, more innovation, and potentially even some reduction in the concentration of wealth. Decentralization could in time offset or diminish the corrupting political effects of concentrated wealth in big energy and industrial agriculture.

Again, one cannot predict where a GCM will stand on particular issues. A GCM

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need not *prima facie* oppose “globalization” or “capitalism.” The movement should seek positives: socio-economic equity, environmental sustainability, strengthened democracy, and human rights. The best combination of ways to achieve these objectives globally, nationally, and locally remains to be seen.

Such considerations can aid a future GCM in creating quick, small, visible victories that enhance the efficacy felt by citizens regarding problems that require global solutions. That low efficacy is a core problem is hardly surprising. Humans have only rarely ever acted as citizens on this scale. We can do so because we must, but positive global change is most likely if it is initiated in many places and spreads organically. Something widely understood to be a global citizens movement will only emerge over time.

The Character of the Global Citizens Movement

What can we anticipate about the nature of a global citizens movement itself? A movement committed to expanded democracy, equity, and human rights must itself, in practice, be inclusive, equitable, and scrupulously democratic. Indeed, given that global institutions incorporating citizen participation will not emerge easily or quickly, the movement must be a model of democracy and inclusiveness to demonstrate the possibility of such democracy on a global scale.

The GCM will also be multi-centered geographically because of, at the very least, the cost of frequent face-to-face meetings. This pattern of decentralization already exists in global civil society. Most global environmental, social justice, and development organizations are either multi-centered or linked to broad geographic networks. Campaign ideas emerge in many locations and can spread to other locations quickly. As noted above, movements like the 1960s American civil rights movement were also multi-centered; an effective global citizens movement almost inevitably will be more so. The civil rights movement spread through the media of the day; today’s campaigns can actively *be* spread using new media rather than depending on traditional, centralized media systems.

In this way, a GCM, decentralized and inclusive, can stand in stark contrast to current global decision-making, both public and private, which is centralized, hierarchical, and exclusive. Global citizens can solve problems directly through personal, community-based, technological, and economic as well as national and international political efforts. Increasing numbers of people can come to understand that what they are doing, or might aspire to do, is potentially part of a citizen-based global effort.

Such actions are necessary because, while effective global governance is long-term, some challenges are too urgent to depend wholly on pressing national governments to step up. With many existing governments, national governments perhaps especially, at least partially within the sway of concentrated wealth, citizens must rise up to explore the possibilities and act on that vision to create change on a global

level. Ultimately, sufficient change will require governmental and intergovernmental action, but those may only be possible when majorities glimpse the kind of world that is possible and, crucially, understand that citizens can make it happen.

Endnotes

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About the Author



Robert Paehlke, a political scientist, is Professor Emeritus of Environmental and Resource Studies at Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario, Canada. He was editor of the environmental journal/magazine *Alternatives* from its founding in 1971 until 1982 and continues to serve on its editorial board and blogs on the politics of the environment at www.alternativesjournal.ca. He is author or editor of six books, including *Some Like It Cold: the Politics of Climate Change in Canada* (2008), *Democracy's Dilemma: Environment, Social Equity and the Global Economy* (MIT Press, 2004), and *Environmentalism and the Future Of Progressive Politics* (Yale UP, 1991). In 1995, he edited *Conservation and Environmentalism: An Encyclopedia*. A new book, on hegemony and global citizenship, will be published in late 2014 or early 2015.



Roundtable



John Bunzl

After reading Robert Paehlke's excellent essay, I feel that it is too timid. I realize he wishes to avoid scaring off the more extreme opponents of global governance, and yet a Great Transition (if there is to be one) is utterly dependent upon global governance. Our efforts hitherto to make our world just and sustainable, we may one day see, were actually little more than fledgling and inadequate attempts to "bargain" with a global political-economic system that is no longer under anyone's control. In 1450, Gutenberg's printing press unwittingly created a completely new context which undermined the medieval system of governance mediated via the Church and European small- and city-states. The radical democratization of knowledge that it enabled completely changed the game. The resulting upheavals could only be resolved by the establishment of a new, higher-level system of governance: the nation-state system in 1648.

Likewise, the technologies of globalization have, over the past 30 years, created a new context which irrevocably undermines national-level governance. This new context, too, we will find, can only be resolved by taking the next, final step up the governance ladder to an appropriate form of citizen-driven binding global governance. This, as Paehlke suggests, is not optional and is, to some degree, already happening via trade agreements. But because these are not democratic, they are making a bad global situation worse. That is why citizen intervention for global governance is urgent. Moreover, it's a part of our evolutionary destiny; it is the next natural step in the human journey towards ever-larger scales of societal cooperation. Nothing short of binding global governance can get the global market genie back in the governance bottle. To portray only extreme libertarians as the obstacle to global governance thus misses the point. It is we, the thousands of activist and NGO movements around the world (i.e. the Global Justice Movement—GJM), who have yet to fully grasp what the game is.

This lack of understanding is also demonstrated by our persistence in believing that 'bargaining'

with the system—via protesting, blaming and shaming corporations, voting in new parties, lobbying, occupying, changing national electoral systems, local action, CSR, ethical consumerism, etc.—might work. Just as the Church could neither understand nor cope with the Enlightenment and its new technologies, the GJM is yet to understand that a global market can only be made just and sustainable by establishing binding global governance. That does not mean we should stop our present ‘bargaining’ strategies or action at national or local levels, only that we should no longer identify ourselves with them. Rather, even as we continue with them, we should identify with the higher purpose of achieving a form of binding, citizen-driven global governance. That evolutionary milestone, the coming of our species’ maturity, is what a Great Transition is all about.

Robert Paehlke points out many important aspects of this transition, but I would like to deepen some of them.

The “new context” that globalization has brought about needs more precise definition. It is the global free movement of capital and other entities which is fundamentally undermining governments as well as the bargaining approaches of the GJM. It is the ability of capital, corporations, bankers, and the rich to move their operations across national borders—often at the click of a computer mouse—that allows them to play one government off against another and to force government regulation into a state of deep ‘regulatory chill’ or, worse, into a race-to-the-bottom. This new context means that governments find themselves outmaneuvered and quite unable to protect any entity—themselves included—that remains nationally rooted. Hence, anything able to move across borders has a decisive advantage over anything that is nationally confined. Corporations and the rich win, while governments, society, small businesses and the environment lose. It is the global free-movement of capital that explains why all governments have become ‘market states.’

This new context also turns democracy into pseudo-democracy. For whoever we may elect has no choice but to implement policies that are attractive to free-moving global markets, investors, and corporations. Governments have no choice but to keep their national economies internationally competitive. Here, Paehlke is mistaken to suggest that governments still have a free choice to select their policies. In France, the example he uses to argue that this freedom exists, President Hollande started out with the intention of a left-wing agenda. But global markets soon called time, forcing Hollande back to the neoliberal status quo.

If we still think politicians are free to set their own agendas, we are sadly mistaken; we have not understood the new context we face. The odd moves governments occasionally make in a positive direction, we should realize, are no more than temporary eddies or counterflows in a river that, overall, is moving in the opposite, negative, market-friendly direction. In a world of global capital, but only national governance, it cannot be otherwise.

So contrary to our present way of thinking is this that we are reluctant to accept it. For to accept that governments are not in control means accepting that they cannot deliver on our demands. This line of thinking indicates that protesting against government policies and trying to get them to change their policies in the way we do now makes little sense. For trying to get the powerless to act is, let's face it, an oxymoron: a false bargain.

Sensing that established political processes have become redundant, the GJM has turned its hand to CSR, corporate codes of practice, triple bottom line accounting, shareholder activism, ethical consumerism, fair trade, conscious capitalism, micro-credit, and whatnot. But, useful though these are, they cannot succeed in getting any more than a tiny fraction of the market to behave sustainably. Ultimately only binding global governance is capable of ensuring that all corporations, banks, markets, etc., conform to appropriate behavior and standards. Equally, talk of global revolution is naive. To have any chance of success, such a revolution would have to occur in virtually every country simultaneously, because otherwise capital would simply move elsewhere, undermine any revolution, and carry on exactly as before.

Thus we arrive at the crux of our problem: party politics as we currently practice it is redundant, revolution can't work, and yet, unfortunately, the strategies pursued by the GJM, too, are inadequate. The new context created by the global free movement of capital comprehensively undermines them all. Helpful and valuable up to a point they may be, but ultimately we will find that they are all false bargains.

The only solution capable of bringing free-moving capital and global markets back under public supervision and accountability, such that meaningful reforms become possible, is some form of binding global governance. But this means coming back to politics and so brings us to a central paradox: How can we possibly re-engage with national political systems—systems we acknowledge to be redundant—while turning them into the most powerful tools for achieving our aim? How can we use

our national votes to bring about binding global governance? How, in short, do we re-engage with redundant national political systems without falling victim to them?

Becoming a political party, even a transnational one, will not work because unless it gains power in virtually every country simultaneously so that it can coordinate its policies globally, it will be outmaneuvered by free-moving capital. So what is the alternative? What would a new kind of global political action look like in today's context? To my mind, the principles that a global citizen's movement seeking to achieve this aim should follow would be the following:

1. A New Semiotics: The pathological system we are now subject to cannot be stopped by any single nation or entity. No one is in control. We are, therefore, all in the same boat. Our struggle, we must realize, is not against anyone. If anything, it is against the destructively competitive system in which we are all caught. No one is to blame but everyone is responsible. Thus, we need to dis-identify from blaming, shaming, and bargaining. This new semiotics thus embraces everyone. It identifies with our deeper evolutionary purpose of achieving an appropriate form of citizen-driven binding global governance.
2. Diversity within Unity. Binding global governance necessarily means global cooperation and coordination. Since binding governance must, by definition, be unitary, it requires a movement that is globally coordinated. Here I disagree with Paehlke. The GJM, if it is to have any chance of success, will have to overcome its postmodern overemphasis on diversity and recognize that unity—a coordinated global plan—also has its indispensable place. Such a plan will be capable of adaptation to different nations, cultures, and political systems and be flexible enough to include democratic as well as non-democratic nations.
3. Simultaneous action: As Paehlke rightly points out, simultaneous action is key. Global solutions can only be implemented if all, or virtually all, nations can be brought to implement them simultaneously. In that way, capital has nowhere to run, nowhere to hide. All nations and their citizens win. Simultaneous action also means we do not need to wait for a formal world government or parliament. We only need the global and simultaneous implementation of various far-reaching policies (e.g., on climate, monetary reform, financial market re-regulation, etc.). Practical, simultaneous, global cooperation is in any case a pre-requisite before any more formal governance arrangements are considered, if they are necessary at all.

4. 'Political Jiu-jitsu': On the paradox of how we re-engage with redundant national political systems without falling victim to them, Jiu-jitsu is the art of manipulating the opponent's force against himself, rather than confronting it with one's own force. A citizens' movement wishing to establish binding global governance will need to re-engage with national politics in this kind of way. Moreover, it will necessarily utilize our right to vote but in a completely new way. Its methodology will be neither NGO lobbying nor a political party. Instead it would be an unprecedented hybrid type of organization: one that fields no candidates and yet drives existing parties and candidates to adopt its policies; one that works *through* national electoral systems but is not of those systems. It will allow us to harness and exponentially multiply the power of our votes in a way that puts citizens back in control—so giving us the necessary 'political efficacy.' This new way of voting, already being used and showing some promise, is showing that even small numbers of voters can have a disproportionately large influence on electoral outcomes, so offering the prospect of pushing all nations towards adopting, and then simultaneously implementing, the movement's agenda.

About the Author



John Bunzl is a global political activist and businessman. In 2000, he founded the Simultaneous Policy (Simpol) campaign, a way for citizens to use their votes to drive politicians towards global cooperation. It has supporters in over 100 countries and enjoys the support of a growing number of Members of Parliament around the world. His authored and co-authored books include *The Simpol Solution*, *Monetary Reform – Making it Happen!*, *People-Centred Global Governance – Making it Happen!*, and *Global Domestic Politics*. He has published numerous articles on global governance in the *Journal of Integral Theory & Practice*. He has lectured widely, including to the Schumacher Society, the World Trade Organisation, the Lucis Trust, and various universities.



Peter Christoff

I would like to begin by thanking Robert Paehlke for his provocative and positive essay. No sensible person could disagree with his proposition that we need more effective and more equitable global governance, and his article challenges us to consider how this might be achieved.

Paehlke proposes three things: first, that enlargement (globalization) of citizenship will overcome reluctance by states and problems of legitimacy among populations, which are barriers to strengthening such governance; second, that a coherent global movement can become a force for—the third proposition—a Great Transition.

I agree with each of these propositions. I am grateful for the article, but unfortunately, I don't think Bob's piece is clear enough about the very tough problems of how we constitute and mobilize around these necessary elements.

My comments are conditioned by my circumstances. I am writing from Europe following the recent European Parliament elections. The resurgence of a resentful ethnic-nationalist politics—powerfully evident everywhere—is fueled not only by immediate economic troubles but also by a strong and related belief in the illegitimacy of 'distant' institutions in a borderless continent. This deepening skepticism, and its underlying democratic and legitimacy deficits, cannot be ignored. I have also been heavily involved in environmental movement politics over the last fifteen years. In my experience, existing progressive movements (and not just environmental ones) are increasingly struggling for traction.

Analysis of these experiences must shape consideration of an even more ambitious project: we need to be analytically clear and practically responsive to the weak foundations on which we might seek now to build a Global Citizens Movement (GCM).

Two issues of legitimacy arise. The first is the legitimacy of the GCM, and the second is the legitimacy of the institutions that it is seeking to establish.

Let's assume the GCM exists and suspend consideration of its form. Why would those in power, sometimes elected to government, care at all about a multitude of extraterritorial voices advocating a program of change—say an Avaaz-style petition of 50 million self-proclaimed 'global signatories' calling for changes to the voting system in Canada or China, or for the amendment of some international treaty, or some other action? What of the reactions of the biggest, most populous, and most problematic states, such as China and the USA, whose domestic populations will probably outweigh any possible 'global' force?

And what would make people want to join this global movement and see it as legitimate 'from within'? Clearly, the GCM's external legitimacy couldn't come primarily from numbers—although that would certainly be an issue—but rather from its normative purpose, which would also be its mobilizing force.

At the same time, its 'internal' legitimacy couldn't come merely from its normative purpose: it would need to have procedural legitimacy, an organizational form that is transparent and embodies its beliefs, and the legitimacy derived from effectiveness (capacity for successful goal-oriented action).

These issues are not new. For instance, one repeatedly hears conservatives challenging progressive civil society organizations, suggesting that groups like Greenpeace, Amnesty, etc., are neither accountable to their members/supporters nor representative of the views of a larger public. The environmental movement gets around this by claiming the moral high ground, saying that it 'speaks for nature.' But claims for justice and equity on behalf of—for instance—developing country populations are hardly straightforward. So the articulation of a normative narrative and organizational 'spine' for a GCM will be complicated by the usual issues of authority and representation.

The second issue—the legitimacy of the institutions of global governance (other than those of civil society)—is even more problematic. Paehlke acknowledges the "legitimate anxieties" that many have about global governance, and "the frequently voiced parallel view that citizen-based global cooperation is essentially silly." The recent EuroParl vote underlines this on a smaller, more intimate geographical scale. But his piece provides no answers to those concerns.

Paehlke's article only weakly defines his vision of 'global citizenship.' It could be either active and robust, or passive and metaphoric (i.e., based in a sort of globalized awareness rather than action for global change). In fact, although I think he generously allows for both, the article mainly talks about active global citizenship. But this doesn't really solve the problem. Two types of 'action' might be considered to help constitute global citizenship: action at the global level, and action with intended global consequences. Both are required.

Paehlke's preference seems to be for the latter, locale-by-locale support for action on global concerns prior to the establishment of institutions for global government. I'm not sure this addresses the 'citizenship' problem sufficiently. Citizenship is constituted of an amalgam of elements—psycho-social, cultural, and political—that are negotiated in and between a variety of institutions and public spheres, and which define the citizen's rights, duties, and identity.

The psycho-social and cultural elements may merely be identity-based and do not necessarily constitute citizenship in its active form. Citizenship—if defined by its collective, purposive action—requires institutional/organizational 'definition,' especially if it is to manifest at the global level. This definition initially depends on old and new institutions of civil society—and then the creation of new institutions of a redesigned system of global governance.

Institutions that might give political definition to global citizenship remain unclear in the essay—which explicitly indicates Bob has little faith in institutional developments that would either shape and carry the movement itself into being, or in terms of securing its governance outcomes and structures.

Paehlke argues, in relation to new institutions for governance, that "global, citizen-based political action must precede whatever new institutional arrangements might emerge in the long run." He notes further that "an institutional structure or central administration [is not necessary]. Movements can be amorphous and grow organically, generally including and spawning diverse organizations, each with continuously evolving perspectives."

Not wanting to go 'there' is understandable. It is a miserable place. Currently, the civil society organizations upon which we might draw—such as transnational NGOs—generally suffer from over-individuation and siloing, even (or especially) within the same 'theme' of action. Similarly, we are

witnessing the failure of existing formal institutions for global governance in critical areas of concern—like climate change.

Nevertheless, I don't think that unstructured interventions via new social media can replace more structured forms of association and organization, especially given the cacophony of calls on our attention and for action, and the trolling, that now flood the blabosphere.

If more is intended, including in the shaping of new global governance institutions via electoral participation, or direct action, then I suspect these elements need to be formalized (bearing in mind the earlier concern about democratic and legitimacy deficits).

Further, I believe global citizenship as local globally-oriented action and little more is insufficient to produce an enduring and effective movement and that without the reconfiguration of legal governance institutions, the transformation is likely to be at worst improbable and at best impermanent.

Paehlke acknowledges “establishing political efficacy globally is a spectacularly daunting challenge.” He offers no recipes for doing so—and that was not the purpose of his article—but does suggest three initiatives: campaigns to “thicken” local and national democracy, promotion of a limited global agenda, and a push for local economic diversity.

I agree with these initiatives but disagree when he adds that “an overarching movement plan is not necessary,” that it is enough for participants in the GCM to “share its broad goals, and actively participate in—or simply support—its initiatives.”

The basis for action, the reason for people joining the GCM, cannot simply be a slogan about the Great Transition but greater clarity about what that transition requires and what the problems (and forces) confronting it might be.

Even a limited global agenda needs a coherent linking analysis, and then a series of clearly identified targets, and strategies for tackling them. Global problems can be prioritized. They often have geographically defined locations or nodes where their drivers are strongest: for instance, with climate change, the USA and China. How are these to be tackled?

Last, I feel the article does not engage sufficiently with the problem of power—either the sources of power of an effective GCM or of its opposition. Let's step back and think about what a vibrant movement of 'citizens without borders' engaging in action is likely to encounter. How will the substantial material interests being challenged, the institutions and individuals threatened by this tide, react? How does this play out? Hacktivism? Wikileaks? Mass mobbing demonstrations against the G20 or COPs or Rio+20? The Occupy Wall Street Movement? How exactly is effective and timely change to occur?

Paehlke's vision offers an exceptionally attractive self-actualizing and decentered path to change, but can also be read as too diffuse, too easily dismantled, too powerless. Its unnamed tensions—between the vision of dynamic, morally charged cultural-revolutionary Global Spring, and the nightmare of voluntaristic and cacophonous movements based on loose associations without clear agreement, directions, drivers, or outcomes—lie at the heart of the crisis of much current civil society activism.

I realize that here I have only offered criticism, with which others may or may not agree. So I again want to stress my gratitude that Paehlke's article incites us now to address the questions it has brought to light.

About the Author



Peter Christoff is a political scientist and Associate Professor who teaches in the Department of Resource Management and Geography at the University of Melbourne. He writes mainly on environmental policy, with a current focus on climate change. His most recent books include *Globalization and the Environment*, co-authored with Robyn Eckersley, and *Four Degrees of Global Warming: Australia in a Hot World*. He also has worked in government and the not-for-profit sector. He was the Assistant Commissioner for the Environment in Victoria in the late 1980s and early 1990s and has been a member of various government committees including the Board of the Environment Protection Authority (Victoria), the Victorian Premier's Climate Change Advisory Group, and the Victorian Ministerial Advisory Council on Climate Adaptation. He was Vice President of the Australian Conservation Foundation from 2006 to 2013 and has served on its board since 2000.



Richard Falk

Reading Robert Paehlke's carefully crafted essay on global citizenship provides the occasion both for an appreciation of his approach and some doubts about its degree of responsiveness to the urgencies of the present or, more specifically, its adequacy in relation to the call for 'transformative vision and praxis' that lies at the heart of the Great Transition Initiative. Paehlke is on strong ground when he ventures the opinion that the planetization of citizenship is an indispensable precondition for the establishment of global governance in forms that are both effective and fair. His insistence that global governance, to be legitimate, must address ethical issues as well as functional ones associated with sustainability is certainly welcome. He is also persuasive in advocating the formation of a global citizens movement (GCM) that takes advantage of the networking and mobilizing potential of the Internet, combining an initial focus on local challenges with the nurturing of a global perspective. An initial caveat is worry that projection of global citizenship prior to the formation of a global community needs to be approached in a spirit of great caution. The danger lurking, as evident in some premature affirmations of being 'a citizen of the world,' (for instance, Gary Davis), is that the sentiment is asserted without the reality of a world community that is a precondition for making it politically relevant. Being the citizen of a state is powerful because nationalism as a motivating ideology is powerful, and because in stable states, a strong sense of national community exists.

Paehlke's deepest sympathies clearly lie with a pluralistic and decentralized GCM that operates, at least for the foreseeable future, without leaders or a common program of action and, as such, is likely, in his words, to be "less threatening" to the established order. But here is where my analysis and prescriptive horizons depart from his: if a transformative global movement is to emerge from current ferment, then it seems strategic to become more threatening, not less. Flying below the radar is not the kind of praxis that will be sufficient to awaken the human species from its long and increasingly dangerous world order slumber.

I would say that the defining feature of Paehlke's approach is an implicit belief that with enough patience and persistence, we can get to the 'there' of effective and equitable global governance from the 'here' of neoliberal globalization and state-centrism that has been accentuating inequality and human insecurity within and between states during the last several decades. He envisions a transformative movement as possible if prudent efforts are made to induce enough global reform to facilitate the kinds of economic development that manage to deliver equity and environmental protection across borders. There is present in Paehlke's worldview a sophisticated linear interpretation of world history that is particularly exhibited through changes in the organizational scale of political communities and in the application of technology to the fundamentals of economic, social, and political life. In his well-chosen words, the spread of a GCM will likely occur "as crises mature and more people appreciate that global governance is where the long arc of human history is taking us—and has been for centuries." In effect, just as the small kingdoms of feudal Europe became too small to handle the expansion of productive capacities and the enlargement of the market, so in the 21st century has the state become no longer able to be responsive to the magnitudes of the challenges facing humanity, a reality that he hopes the formation and activity of a GCM will highlight and help with the mobilization of an appropriate theory and praxis of response. Paehlke makes clear that his advocacy of global citizenship does not imply either a prediction or prescription that the only adequate form of global governance is world government. He leaves open to the dynamics of evolving interaction how transformative governmental adjustments will be made, implying that there are alternative paths to optimal modalities of future global governance and that history encourages the confidence that needed adjustments will be forthcoming.

Understandably preoccupied with the inequalities stemming from current patterns of economic globalization, Paehlke believes that a robust GCM will tend to shift political consciousness from the competitive logic of a world of states to the communal logic of a world of people. Such a shift, should it occur in relation to the agenda of global policy bearing on human security, would indeed go a long distance toward satisfying the ideational prerequisites of the Great Transition Initiative. But I find it hard to believe that this shift in outlook could come about unless it is actualized by a prior radical and worldwide social movement that *deliberately* shakes the foundations of the established political and economic order. These differing logics also reflect the multiple unevenness of various national circumstances that bear on the wages and safety of workers, and the wellbeing of others, as well as

fixing the appropriate level of environmental protection. At stake, additionally, is whether there exists enough common global ground to overcome the geographic locus of global policy that has up to this point in modern times given us a world of competing national and transnational interests organized to give preference to the priorities of the West.

How these kinds of tensions can be overcome by approaching policymaking from the perspective of shared challenges and opportunities seems daunting, and suggests that the GCM, despite being oriented by Paehlke toward the local, will fail to exert much transformative leverage. To exert transformative influence, it would have to reorient political consciousness toward the North Star of human interests, which presupposes a qualitative departure from the bounded space of territorial sovereign states whose leadership regards itself pledged to maximize national interests while at the same time, without acknowledgement, promoting transnational financial flows and capital efficiency. The 'without acknowledgement' is important as national political leaders must hide the extent to which they are captives of entrenched transnationalized economic elites and thus need to deceive the citizenry as to why certain policy adjustments are politically non-viable even to be proposed.

A robust GCM would benefit greatly from the establishment of some form of global parliament, which has been long advocated by those who do not accept the conventional strictures of citizenship as linked to nationalism. Such a parliamentary institution, depending on how it emerged, could begin to articulate global policy from contrarian perspectives to those associated with the outlook of leading states and hopefully help prepare the ground for the emerge of stronger community feelings on regional and global levels. Especially important would be articulations of the human and global interest, as well as bringing to bear a variety of views not represented by governments acting on behalf of national and sub-national interests and primarily dedicated to the promotion of transnational capital in all its forms. To develop a transformative consciousness, we must first understand the wide gaps between a nationally oriented political consciousness and one that is humanly oriented.

Such a positive outcome cannot be assumed to follow from the mere establishment of a global parliament. As soon as such an institution achieves gains in stature, it would almost inevitably become a site of struggle for competing worldviews, including class conflict, ideological differences, and a variety of culture wars. I mention such concerns in light of the recent experience of the European Parliament, which has had the roller coaster ride of being long discounted as an irrelevant talk shop before being

taken gradually more seriously, and now becoming significant enough to alert the most reactionary forces in Europe to its political potentialities. These regressive forces are now determined to take over the institution with the evident intention of pushing the European Union further in Islamophobic, anti-immigrant, and socially harsh directions. These risks of cooption and neutralization cast a thickening cloud over the near future of the European Parliament and in various ways clarify why, over the decades, the United Nations has so disappointed expectations of those seeking a peaceful and just world order and seems often to have become the scene of an institutional race to the bottom or nothing more than a playground for geopolitical rivals.

In effect, I am arguing that a reformist outlook, while useful, is not mobilizing in relation to the deeper concerns about the human future. Such a more relaxed outlook toward the global setting implicitly believes that there is ample time and political space for the transformative forces of humanism to work their magic. I find the evidence and tendencies to be quite the opposite. We are living in a time of emergency as far as the human species is concerned. I know this political consciousness has existed previously. Some respected observers insist that apocalyptic fears are nothing other than a symptom of all civilizational transitions, and that ours reflect the ending of modernity. In opposition, I would argue that the apocalyptic realities of the current challenges make the claim of emergency the only responsible reaction given the evidence surrounding growing risks of species collapses. I realize that Paehlke is arguing against such world order 'alarmism,' which he and many others believe to be politically debilitating. I contend, in opposition, that we must orient praxis toward the real if we wish to act with sanity and in an aroused spirit of dedication to a better human future.

The world has had several decades to react and adapt, but has not done so. I would point to the normalization of nuclear weaponry in the security mentality of powerful states and the inability of these same states to act responsibly in relation to the strong scientific consensus about the menace of climate change. What these failures of response to such fundamentally threatening developments disclose, above all, is a biopolitical uncertainty about whether the human species as a species has a sufficient will to survive. We know that individuals have such a will, which is generally extended to embrace family, loved ones, and even friends and neighbors. Also, nationalism has demonstrated the intensity of a national will to survive even at great potential cost to the partial self of nationhood and the larger self of humanity as a whole. The shared security commitment of lead governments to nuclear deterrence during the Cold War expressed an omnicidal readiness to risk the fate of the species, and thereby

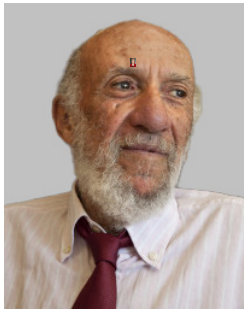
give an absolute value to the survival of the state and nation. Our hopes for the future depend on determining whether this apparent weak will to survive at the level of the human species is hard-wired into our collective mental processes or is a contingent byproduct of modernity encased in a state-centric and neoliberal world order that can be reconfigured for survival and justice, but not without a difficult struggle organized from below, that is, by a movement that catches on among the masses or ‘the multitude.’

Despite my appreciation of Paehlke’s hopes for the GCM and the fact that many of his formulations are congenial, I find the overall framework of thought and action too constrained by the assumptions that global citizenship can be understood and enacted as a spatial phenomenon. This includes the bias toward promoting local solutions to the extent possible to avoid dangerous and unpopular concentrations of political power. I would argue that time is as important as space in the reconfiguration of citizenship, especially as the challenges become more severe with the passage of time.

For instance, compare the relative simplicity of achieving total nuclear disarmament in 1945, when only one country possessed a few atomic bombs, with the complexities associated with trying to negotiate a disarmament treaty with nine nuclear states that have vastly different security priorities and perceptions. Or consider the difficulties of addressing climate change after the planet heats up by 4 degrees Celsius or more by mid-century as compared to dealing with greenhouse gas emissions effectively in the 1990s when the nature of the threat was first convincingly established by the overwhelming weight of scientific opinion. Even those with some sensitivity to the gravity and urgency of the challenge, such as Barack Obama, are so constrained by the practicalities of politics that they continue to limit recommended solutions to those that are market-based and have already been demonstrated to be ineffective. The larger point here is that citizenship must become as oriented toward time and the future at least as much as toward the geographies and peoples now living within territorial boundaries. To capture this sense of space/time, I have previously championed the ideal of ‘citizen pilgrims,’ those engaged in a journey toward a sustainable and emancipated future that acknowledges and acts upon mounting threats to human survival as well as tries hard to make the planet more morally, aesthetically, and spiritually responsible.

Paehlke ends his essay by distancing himself from ideological markers of left/right and saying that a GCM “need not prima facie oppose ‘globalization’ or ‘capitalism’” in its commitment to finding “quick, small, visible victories that enhance the efficacy felt by citizens” in relation to problems requiring global solutions. In his essay, there is missing any critique of the links between militarism and neoliberal globalization or between global inequalities and the postcolonial interventionism and force projections of the West, especially the United States. There is a certain originality in Paehlke’s stress on the lack of confidence by citizens in relation to activity in the public sphere given the way state and market function in our world. Yet in the end, I find restoring confidence in citizen efficacy and the encouragement of working within the system to be the wrong way to go given what we know, fear, and hope. So conceived, a GCM is likely to divert our attention while we as a species drift ever closer to a nightmarish future. In essence, to achieve a Great Transition of happier dreams we must begin by distinguishing between ‘us’ and ‘them.’ This may seem divisive, but in a world so hierarchical and divided by class, race, and gender, to do otherwise is to retreat disastrously from the realities of political life. It is fine to crave unity, but in the meantime, we are entrapped in a series of structures that reward conflict, produce exploitation, and regard disunity and enduring division as endemic to the human condition. At best, we can affirm dialogic modes of being in the world, an engagement with ‘otherness’ in all its forms, but also with the humbling recognition that there are radically different appreciations of what needs to be done. One benefit of dialogue that transcends state-centric categories is to build communities of belief and joint action that are sensitive to the realities of ‘the human’ and ‘the global’ without needing to abandon identities rooted in the great particularities of ‘the national’ and ‘the personal.’

About the Author



Richard Falk is Albert G. Milbank Professor Emeritus of International Law at Princeton University, Fellow of the Orfalea Center of Global Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and Associate Fellow at Tellus Institute. He directs the project on Global Climate Change, Human Security, and Democracy at UCSB and formerly served as director of the North American group of the World Order Models Project and the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Occupied Palestine. He is the author of such books as *Power Shift: On the New Global Order*; *(Re)Imagining Humane Global Governance*; *Religion and Humane Global Governance*; and *Explorations at the Edge of Time*. He holds an SJD from Harvard University.



John Martin Gillroy

Robert Paehlke's argument seems to have entirely ignored the reality that his GCM is a form of collective action problem. If so, it is well established that these dilemmas cannot be solved from within, or by bottom-up efforts alone. In order for a GCM to be successful, it might start from the bottom-up with the development of social conventions in distinction to the market and sovereignty-based ones currently informing international law. But it would then have to turn these conventions of practice into legal rules and find an institutional structure to balance principle and process in the promotion of the alternative moral precepts that Paehlke advocates. Without top-down reorganization and the intervention of legal governance institutions, the transformation is at worst improbable and at best impermanent.

If Paehlke is correct that "[t]he history of citizenship suggests that global citizenship is part of a natural (though not inevitable) progression of human history," this history should also be acknowledged to demonstrate that the most successful collective action takes place within an evolving legal superstructure of rules, incentives, and changing principles. Although one level is both formed and reformed by the other, the dialectic of both is the most critical element of any analysis of collective action, but a full discussion of the forces within this dialectic as it applies to Paehlke's GCM is largely absent from both the original essay and the discussion of it.

There is little treatment of what the GCM collective action problem is, what the character of the strategic context demands, the assumed character of the individual assumed by the policymakers to be involved in creating the collective action movement, let alone the relationship of the collective action problem to both the existing international legal structure, or the changes in that structure that would be necessary to implement Paehlke's recommendations.

This points to a more fundamental failure in our ability to trace the logical connections between the initial premises of our arguments and the empirical results we assume from them. What good

is it to ponder something like a GCM if we cannot understand the fundamental assumptions and core principles, that is, the essential philosophical logic of concepts at the heart of what is being argued and what makes a certain policy and certain empirical results logical entailments of it? This is the difference between argument and opinion.

If Paehlke is correct that the problems that demand a GCM, like rising inequality, are “more a result of public policy than an inevitable result of global economic integration, particularly when such policies are economically inefficient, socially divisive, politically corrosive, and environmentally destructive,” then it is the paradigm of policy design assumed by the analyst, viz. the theoretical and practical structure of argument that answers these fundamental questions, that is of critical importance to any serious discussion of a GCM as a component of global transformation. Only with such structure can one establish the logic of philosophical and factual concepts that inform our premises and then generates the set empirical conclusions they demand and in this way present an intact and systematic argument that can be critically, that is logically, analyzed.

Paehlke gestures toward a possible policy paradigm with his reference to Rousseau’s thought as a basis for the generation of the movement, but a simple reference is not enough to see how a policy paradigm based on Rousseau’s philosophical logic of concepts would necessarily lead to the type of GCM described by Paehlke. If great transformation is to be made, we need to understand and test various such paradigms and make complete arguments with a substructure of philosophical logic and a superstructure of empirical policy recommendations that are logically tied together and imply one-another in order to judge their comparative value. Otherwise, we are merely engaged in an eristic clash of opinion.

Progress will not occur through disconnected assumptions, random critical principles, and a specific wish list of empirical policy goals with no apparent connection to one another. If Great Transformations are to be more than talking points, we need a revolution in the systematic study of law and policy that joins logics of policy investigation with concurrent logics of philosophical concepts: superstructure of argument with its substructure. Not doing so is how a discussion like this can proceed without any significant mention of the demands of the fundamental collective action problem at the foundation of Paehlke’s call for a GCM.

About the Author



John Martin Gillroy is Professor of International Relations and Public International Law and Founding Director of the Graduate Programs in Environmental Policy Design at Lehigh University. His research involves creating alternatives to the market paradigm and cost-benefit methods and the use of R.G. Collingwood's Philosophical Method as a prerequisite for scientific method. He is the author of the recent book *An Evolutionary Paradigm for International Law Philosophical Method, David Hume, and the Essence of Sovereignty* and the editor of the book series *Philosophy, Public Policy And Transnational Law*.



Liisa Horelli

Robert Paehlke raises the pertinent question of how to co-create and nurture global, citizen-based governance that will protect and enhance local political efficacy leading to a sustainable planetary culture.

We are leading our everyday lives in a glocal context which is becoming increasingly familiar, not only to the leaders of corporations, public institutions, and global citizen movements (GCMs), but also to ordinary citizens. The process of glocalization consists of a two-way traffic comprising macro-localization (expansion from the local towards the global, often aided by digitalization) and micro-globalization (incorporation of global ideas to the local level). Thus, there is buzz going on in urban neighborhoods in which residents seek to manage their lives by participating in urban planning, community development, and local co-governance involving “a play with the glocal.” Participation often takes the form of self-organization which has a direct local impact in addition to gradual systemic change. Therefore, these people are not laggards but an important population of future glocal citizenry.

Local co-governance tends to take place, at least in the democracies of Northern European countries, in different types of public spheres that are both informal (cafes, local Facebook walls), formal (city boards, councils), and semi-formal (neighbourhood assemblies, local web-sites). Citing philosopher Carolyn M. Hendricks, local co-governance can ideally be considered as an integrated deliberative system. Such co-governance seems to require the application of the Quadruple Helix model which comprises users, firms, universities, and public authorities. Therefore, the transformative strategy does not only depend on the citizen movements, although they are extremely important as change agents. Such partnerships could and should be upscaled to the global level as well.

It was also interesting to read what Paehlke wrote about the transformation of citizenship from civil rights to those of social and environmental ones. Citizenship is a psycho-social, cultural, and political construction that is negotiated between a variety of (democratic) institutions and the citizens in public spheres. This results in rights, duties, and emotional commitment (identity processes). But with whom can citizens negotiate global citizenship? Justice does not emerge automatically; the poor and fragile think fair treatment is a privilege. And in spite of several motivational theories, we still don't know what makes people tick in terms of planetary issues.

Transforming cultures is a complex process that takes a long time to develop. I don't think that the process is yet ripe for a fixed institutional solution, although targeted and radical actions are needed. Meanwhile, we have the time to test different multi-level models of action and co-governance and to co-create better theories of change and motivation.

About the Author



Liisa Horelli is an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Real Estate, Planning and Geoinformatics, at Aalto University, Finland, and Visiting Professor of Designing for Smart Cities at the Polytechnic University of Milan, Italy. She has written extensively in academic and popular journals about gender and intergenerational issues, evaluation, and the user approach in technology development and regional/spatial planning and has published two books on environmental psychology. Her latest projects and publications deal with time planning, the co-creation of services, and gendering "smart cities." Since the 1990s, she has conducted evaluations of numerous EU-funded programs and projects from a gender perspective. She is a former President of the Finnish Evaluation Society and a Board Member of the European Evaluation Society. She holds a PhD in environmental psychology from Helsinki University of Technology.



Michael Karlberg

Robert Paehlke's article on global citizenship offers an excellent analysis, and prescription, regarding many of the structural and political dimensions of the Great Transition.

There is, however, another inseparable dimension that needs to be examined in the context of a global citizenship movement. Structural and political changes of the magnitude Paehlke envisions occur only with the emergence of larger systems of meaning—semiotic systems—that render them sensible, desirable, and possible. In the absence of such semiotic changes, structural and political changes of the kinds we desire are extremely unlikely.

At the core of such semiotic changes are assumptions about human nature, assumptions about the nature of society, and assumptions about the purpose and meaning of human life.

For instance, if humans are presumed to be nothing more than highly intelligent animals pursuing their material interests or seeking to satiate their material appetites in an environment of scarce resources, and society is presumed to be an arena for the competitive pursuit of these ends, and the meaning and purpose of our lives is defined by success or failure in this arena—then why would a movement for global citizenship and global governance make any sense?

Likewise, if humans are presumed to be living out transitory lives en route to eternal salvation or eternal damnation, and if this earthly existence is nothing more than a way of separating the saved from the damned, and if an anthropomorphic deity is about to put an end to the entire episode—then why would a movement for global citizenship and global governance make any sense?

Or if humans are presumed to be limitless in their capacity for technological innovation, and if societies are the means by which technological advances are organized, and if technological innovations can ultimately solve any problems humans will ever face—then why would a movement for global citizenship and global governance be necessary?

There are, of course, many other systems of meaning at play in the world today, including many that are far more thoughtful than those sketched above. But my point is that the Great Transition this forum seeks will not occur in a semiotic vacuum. Its structural dimensions, like those Paehlke examines, will advance only to the degree that its semiotic dimension advances. In this context, the Great Transition will have to be, in part, a great semiotic transition at the level of widely held assumptions about human nature, assumptions about the nature of society, and assumptions about the purpose and meaning of human life.

Historically, semiotic transitions of this sort have been associated with the birth or reformation of major religious systems. Indeed, the Latin root for the word religion denotes binding people together in unity—or in community—based on a shared system of meaning. The Great Transition in front of us today will depend on binding people together in a global community. What is needed is the emergence of a global system of meaning within which global citizenship and global governance—and all the corresponding structural prescriptions—are rendered sensible, desirable, and possible.

So the question we would do well to ask ourselves is, how can this semiotic process be advanced, or how can such a system of meaning emerge, in tandem with the other dimensions of the great transition being discussed in this forum?

One thing we can probably say with confidence is that it will not emerge merely through the operation of the free market, because the system of meaning produced by the free market is a system of advertising and marketing designed merely to stimulate material consumption.

I would also venture to say that it will not emerge in the sphere of political discourse, with its inherent tendencies to divide rather than unite.

And personally, I think we are naive if we assume it will somehow emerge spontaneously through social networking or other computer-mediated and democratized modes of discourse which ultimately tend to isolate people in the construction of mediated pseudo-communities.

Rather, semiotic transformations, or revolutions, require the same kinds of educating, organizing, and mobilizing that are invariably at the center of real processes of social change. Historically, this has also been a major function of religion.

But religion has, itself, all too frequently become corrupted and abused by political and economic forces that pervert its accomplishments and distort its ends. So the concept of religion, itself, is in need of a great transition.

All of this should raise some profoundly challenging questions for everyone who is interested in creating a more just and sustainable social reality on this planet.

About the Author



Michael Karlberg is Professor of Communication Studies at Western Washington University. His interdisciplinary scholarship examines prevailing conceptions of human nature, power, social organization, and social change—and their implications for the pursuit of peace and justice. He authored the books *Beyond the Culture of Contest* and *Constructing Social Reality: An Inquiry into the Normative Foundations of Social Change* along with numerous articles and book chapters on related themes. His most recent community-engaged research focuses on the role of radical constructive agency in the creation of more peaceful and just social forms.



Author's Response



Response to Comments

I would like to begin by thanking to all who responded to my essay; I am pleased to participate in such a thoughtful discussion. We all understand that democratic global governance is essential –and a very great challenge. We appreciate that the idea of global citizenship must be advanced conceptually and within everyday political practice.

Several commenters felt that I did not go far enough—though there were differences regarding just what going further meant. Some urged placing a higher priority on challenging the moral underpinnings of neoliberalism (or, as Michael Karlberg put it more broadly, changing higher systems of meaning). Others look to prioritize institutional, policy, and legal changes at the global level. Both approaches are needed, and the comments offered will cause me to rethink many things. Likewise, the discussion regarding the best geographic scale for change has been especially interesting.

On balance, I lean toward prioritizing getting more people to appreciate that real change is possible. I am very much inclined to the idea of radical niches mentioned in the discussion. We need to create places that adopt concrete practices as laboratories, examples that can demonstrate that change is possible. Making place-based changes visible to like-minded people is why the citizen-based journalism of the Internet is so crucial. These niches can be made visible in words, pictures and sound instantaneously and globally. One obvious task of a global citizens' movement is thus to create and grow outlets for citizen journalism (and to defend net neutrality).

Liisa Horelli highlighted the growth of glocalism. This is a potentially significant part of a strategy to build active global citizenship from the ground up: making changes that can be made where they can be made. In North America, that might be a big jump in minimum wages locally, then statewide, and then nationally; the introduction of Copenhagen-style systems of safe transportation; supports for local, organic agriculture; or the establishment of a state or province-

wide carbon tax, feed-in-tariff, or renewable energy standard. Other comments offered examples of what can be done in very different political contexts, and, importantly, John Bunzl offers simultaneous action as a way to take change at the national level to the global even if we are not yet capable (or even necessarily willing) to establish global governmental institutions.

My view that concrete local changes focused on global concerns are critical to building political efficacy and, ultimately, a global citizens' movement has been strengthened by this exchange. Such changes may not be transformative in and of themselves, but I now appreciate that they are a necessary part of breaking through the mindset of 'today-as-an-inevitable-eternity.' I now see that to succeed in this we must place and communicate these limited achievements in global and systemic contexts and to be clear that we ultimately seek global change. The many recent, seemingly modest, gains regarding food sovereignty, local food, solar energy, safer transportation, and citizen-based media limit the appeal of some of global capital's favored outputs, but are only potentially part of undermining the neoliberal ethos.

The comments from Richard Falk and Peter Christoff are perhaps most challenging. They both focused on opposing entrenched power and the urgency of the task at hand. It is difficult to advocate for the modest steps that large numbers of people might be capable of taking when opposition to change is so well-entrenched and rising inequality and climate change so threatening to so many.

Urgency is a tricky matter. I agree with Richard Falk that should the planet get anywhere near to a projected 4-degree average temperature change, no one will be in any position to fix or prevent further climate impacts. Indeed, in my view, we will be lucky not to annihilate each other before that point. It is difficult to advocate modest initiatives, cautious about the risks of tyranny and locally oriented in the face of today's risks, but so many of the people we must reach are cynical, pessimistic, and resigned. We will not easily reach them with additional bad news or through urging seemingly improbable change. At the same time, of course, we cannot simply pretend difficult changes are not needed. We face here a double bind and a balancing act. To paraphrase Camus in *The Plague*, we must do what we can (and do whatever we can to encourage others to follow).

Peter Christoff also gets to the heart of our problem—the one I freely admit to being unable to anything near fully resolve: power, both ours (how do we create it) and 'theirs' (how do we challenge it effectively at a global scale). All I can say is that mobilization is easier if we have well-chosen policy

targets and achievable (and, therefore, limited) initial goals. I think we need to grow the numbers of people that self-consciously and actively seek global change, change that can only rarely at this point be seen through at the global level. I agree that protesting at the G8 is not going to change much (though advocating a greater citizen voice in trade negotiations might strike a chord with many).

Broadly, the best hope of overcoming the global collective action problem that John Gillroy rightly identifies is a movement that promotes citizen action, shared values, and an increased sense of global commonality. The challenge of collective action problems is that too few are prepared to risk what they have. Our challenge is to convince people that the greater risk is in not acting and that not only do we run a risk of losing a great deal if we fail to act together, but we will also miss the clear and available chance to build a better world.